



DOR NewsRelease

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Department of Revenue

For Release: Monday, March 16, 2009

Contact: Robert R. Bliss – blissr@dor.state.ma.us
(617) 626-2369

Average state income tax refund is \$468, up \$18 from last year

About 2 million tax filers have yet to send in their return; many of them will receive refunds

More than 1.1 million taxpayers have received refunds averaging \$468 this filing season, according to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. That is \$521.5 million in refunds, but there is an estimated \$700 million more owed to taxpayers who have not yet filed. So far, 81 percent of those filing have received a refund.

Electronic filing is up 6 percent from a year ago, with 82 percent of all returns filed electronically. The current turnaround time to deposit a refund for a return filed electronically is 3.1 days, nearly half the 5.8 days it takes to process a return from a paper refund.

With just a month left before the April 15th filing deadline, DOR Commissioner Navjeet K. Bal has released a list of the Top Ten Taxpayers Tips to assist the estimated 2.4 million filers who have yet to complete their 2008 tax return.

1. **File electronically to receive the quickest refunds.** While turnaround time for refunds filed electronically may take 3.5 days by April 15, refunds for paper returns could take seven to eight days by the time April 15 rolls around.
2. **Use WebFile for Income if you are filing a simple tax return with no schedules.** DOR's new free online tax filing system is quick, accurate and secure – and it saves your filing information for future reference.
3. **Take advantage of the personal income tax amnesty offer if you are eligible.** By now, some 159,000 taxpayers who are eligible for this amnesty offer should have received an amnesty tax bill in the mail. Not having to pay penalties on tax already owed could save hundreds of dollars off tax previously owed to DOR.
4. **Stay away from Refund Anticipation Loans.** No taxpayer should have to pay interest on their refund, yet thousands do every year when they take out a refund anticipation loan in advance of receiving their refund check. Have your refund check routed to a bank account for the quickest receipt, and at no cost.

-more-

5. **If you are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit, take it.** The federal EITC program is aimed at low- and moderate-income taxpayers, and also delivers a credit on your state income tax equal to 15% of the federal credit. The EITC can be worth several thousand dollars or more for those eligible.
6. **If you are 65 or older, check out the Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit.** Nearly 20,000 tax filers have taken this credit so far, but tens of thousands more are eligible for what this year is an average credit of \$725 to offset property taxes paid by homeowners and renters.
7. **Make sure to include Schedule HC (Health Care) with your tax return, and if you have questions about filling out this schedule, use DOR's online tutorial.** DOR's online calculator will also assist in calculating whether a taxpayer was able to have afforded health insurance in 2008.
8. **Don't get scammed.** Check out the IRS list of the Dirty Dozen tax scams at <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=180075,00.html>
9. **If you are having trouble paying your taxes call DOR to discuss options and to work out a payment plan.** Don't allow tax debts to pile up without contacting DOR. Tax resolution companies promise to make your tax debt vanish for pennies on the dollar, but the reality is they seldom deliver what is promised and in fact may wind up costing you money without delivering any tax relief.
10. **Visit the DOR website to find more information on these programs and to see videos and tutorials on many of these subjects.** DOR's website, www.mass.gov/dor is chockful of information and links to answer all your tax questions. Our phone lines are also open at 617-887-6367 or at 1-800-392-6089.